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## SOUTH-EAST ASIA

BRUNEI

1951

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Previous

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Subsequent

H.531

24/10

Mr. ~~Sayl~~

15/11

1) Mrs. Robison

20/11

2) Sir G. Whitley

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Miss Williams (v)

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1. Brunei Sav 104

16-10-51

Mrs. Robison  
Sir G. Whiteley.

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You will be interested to see the reply to our comments on the Brunei Annual Report on Education for 1949 (3 on 1950 file), & the comments of the State Education Office on Miss Guillian's report on Brunei.

The suggestions put to Brunei, & Miss Guillian's recommendations, have in general been accepted, but practical difficulties, mainly the lack of suitably qualified staff, will inevitably delay their implementation. This is a situation which should gradually improve.

H. Sand  
15/11

May we have these papers be sent for his European tour or when she returns to office in April next?

22/4/52

↓  
B.V. according to  
G.C.W.  
20/11

A. H. Robison  
20/4/52

(B)

Miss Guillian

B.J. v.m.s. above.

(H.S. 22/4)

Thank you.

H. Sand  
24/4

(B)

H.S.31  
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SAVING.  
From the High Commissioner for Brunei.  
To the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Date..... 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1951.

No. 104 Saving.

59724/2/51

Your Saving telegram No. 77 of the 5th of September, 1950. Miss Gwilliam's Report on Brunei. A copy of the State Education Officer, Brunei is attached.

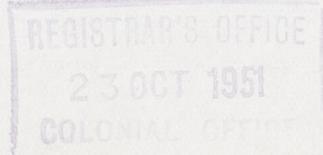
comment of the -----  
2. The attendance of the State Education Officer at the last two regional conference of Directors of Education held in Singapore was very beneficial. The increased air services have greatly improved communications between the territories. The Director of Education, Sarawak was able to visit Brunei again at the end of 1950, and it is hoped that the Woman Education Officer will be able to pay a visit this year. An Inspector of Schools from Sarawak has inspected all Chinese Schools in Brunei during the past two years.

3. The contact with Batu Lintang Training Centre and School is also of very great importance. Not only does this provide 10 trained teachers and "English" education facilities for seven pupils from Brunei each year, but it necessitates consultation on matters of general policy and detailed consideration of salary scales, syllabi, curricula, etc. Consultation on Mission "English" Schools is difficult because the Head of the Roman Catholic Mission, the only Mission operating schools in Brunei, is stationed in North Borneo.

4. The extended provision and improvement of English education is probably the most important and urgent problem awaiting solution. The practical difficulty is the recruitment of qualified staff. Attempts have been made to recruit from the United Kingdom two temporary Education Officers under the "secondment scheme". So far one officer (who is a married man) has been obtained. Qualified Asian Staff is not available locally and the only solution is to recruit a few trained "English" Teachers from Malaya and Singapore. Such recruitment is seriously hampered by the comparatively inferior and unattractive salary scales applicable in the Borneo territories.

5. The standard of the few Mission "English" Schools, which provide the only opportunities for English education at present, falls far below the desired level; very largely because of inadequate and untrained staff. If there should be unavoidable delay in establishing Government English Schools in the main towns, consideration will be given to ways and means of encouraging the Roman Catholic Mission to staff and equip their schools more efficiently.

/6. The position ...





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From the High Commissioner for Brunei.  
To the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Date.....

No. ....Saving.

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6. The position concerning training in trades and crafts has improved considerably as the Oil Company has recently opened at Seria a Preparatory Trade School which educates pupils up to the standard required for admission to the Company's Technical School. The possibility of awarding a few scholarships tenable at the Government Trade School, Singapore, is also being considered.

7. The rapid post-war development of such voluntary organisations as the Red Cross, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides has placed a very considerable strain on the comparatively few literate people in Brunei. However, consideration will be given to the possibility of organising an Adult Literacy Campaign. There is a good deal of adult education being organised at Seria by the Education and Welfare Staff of the Oil Company.

8. The question of the establishment of a Regional Text-book and Publications Bureau has been under consideration for some time. Without the assistance of such a central agency it is very doubtful whether the Borneo territories would be able, within a foreseeable time, to provide such publications.

9. I regret the delay in replying to your Saving telegram under reference.

Comments on Miss Gwilliam's Report

(Saving Telegram 77 of 5th September, 1950)

I regret that I have not got down to commenting on Miss Gwilliam's Report earlier; I have refrained for several reasons. First of all I considered that the comments should be withheld until the visit of Sir Christopher Cox, secondly, I considered that as the Annual Report was about to be compiled, that it would be best to incorporate the points in that report. They could thus be fitted into the general picture which the Annual Report gives. Over and above these considerations, my duties both in connection with the Administrative work of my Department and my desire to visit all Brunei Schools before the end of 1950 have made heavy demands on my time. The comments below are taken from the notes from which my Annual Report will be compiled. They are perhaps not all relevant.

Miss Gwilliam's Introduction. As an officer who has served in Malaya I was very struck, after being only two or three weeks in Brunei, with its very close resemblance to several States in the Malay Peninsula, especially the State of Kelantan, the State in which I served previous to coming to Brunei. The resemblance, of course, is not accidental, it is due to the circumstance that Brunei Malays are the exact counterparts of their Malayan "cousins". They follow the same religion, they speak the same language; their geographical background, their native pursuits and their mode of life are similar in all respects. The fact that the Administration follows the Malayan pattern is, I think, not so much due to the circumstance that all Brunei Administrators have been drawn from Malaya. The pattern grew naturally, as it grew in Malaya, around identical geographical and ethnological conditions, and would, I think, have followed the original pattern had her administrators been drawn from other sources. The important corollary which follows is, that at the present stage of development, Brunei must recapitulate the stages of development of Malay States, like Johore, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu, especially in the field of Education. I have therefore, in all my deliberations in connection with the Education Policy to be pursued here, considered this resemblance as a dominating factor in framing that Policy; especially in respect of the dovetailing of Vernacular Education, both Malay and Chinese, into the English system. I give below material extracts from the Educational Policy of the Federation of Malaya, taken from the Statement of Educational Policy (Council Paper No. 53 of 1946) published on page 29 of the Annual Report on Education in the "Malayan Union" for 1947:-

Paragraph 2.

- "1. There will be free Primary Education through the mother tongue in Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English.
2. English will be taught in all schools.
3. Full educational privileges will be extended to girls no less than to boys.

Paragraph 3.

Post Primary schools will consist of:-

- a. Schools in which English is the medium of instruction with the study of the mother tongue continuing
- b. Schools in which the mother tongue remains the medium of instruction with the study of English continuing.

In Post Primary schools there will be a generous provision of free places for pupils selected by merit from Primary Schools in addition to the provision of places for paying pupils who reach the prescribed standard of attainment (and are of suitable age) for admission to the schools."

In Brunei, at first, the transfer of pupils from Malay and Chinese Schools (we have no Tamil Schools) will take place after the pupils have completed four years in their Primary School. This will be reduced to three years eventually. At first, also, there will be no direct entry to Government English Schools; but, if staffing and accommodation permit, the English system will be extended to include those who do not go first to a vernacular school. Such would be fee-paying pupils.

The advisability of following the Malayan Policy gains further strength from the fact (mentioned by Miss Gwilliam in paragraph (2) of "The Situation") that the core of our Malay Teaching staff consists of teachers who were trained in Malayan Training Institutions and who learnt their craft in the Peninsula Malay Schools. It is true that a small flow of trained teachers from Batu Lintang has now begun, but the strong influence of the Malayan group will be felt for many years to come. Again, the fact that the first recruits to the ranks of our English School Staff will come from Malaya forges the link with Malaya a little stronger and they will fit snugly into the general scheme. The policy might at some future date, when the present "bias" in Malay education reaches a compromise wherein the two "factions" become blended, receive a peculiar local bent, but the Educational system as a whole will not achieve individuality until the English section expands and is staffed by a large proportion of local Brunei teachers.

Miss Gwilliam's Recommendations. Generally speaking these include matters discussed during conversations I had with her. They still remain the important features in the aim and policy of the Department.

Her recommendation that there should be frequent meetings between the Heads of the Education Departments of the three territories is a good one. We have actually met together once. Time and distance are the hindering agents and preclude even infrequent meetings. The liaison, however, is maintained by exchanges of views by correspondence, especially in those matters which constitute common problems. But as far as Brunei is concerned the liaison is strongest with Sarawak. There are several matters on which Sarawak and Brunei are closely associated and there is a constant interchange of views taking place concerning them. Some of the points raised by Miss Gwilliam are included in the matters mentioned. These matters include paragraph (1a) in Miss Gwilliam's recommendations "The provision and supply of

suitable textbooks both for Schools and Adult Education needs." Especially in respect of the provision of suitable textbooks for Chinese Schools. This, I may say, is at the moment engaging the attention of a committee at a very High Level.

Our closest association with Sarawak, however, arises from the common ground of the Training of Malay Teachers and the education of selected vernacular school pupils in an Academic Course in the Batu Lintang Training Centre. Altogether we have 20 teachers in training and 23 pupils undergoing the Academic Course. I am of opinion that most beneficial results will accrue from this common field, wherein the students of Brunei and Sarawak fraternise. I have already referred to the flow of trained teachers which has now begun from Batu Lintang; but the important and perhaps the most valuable contribution the association makes, is the circumstance that Brunei's most advanced students receiving an Education in which the medium of instruction is English are those undergoing the Academic Course in that Institution. It is perhaps a long view to the time when they will return to Brunei to play their part in her Educational Development, but, "They are the hope of their side". Thus the seeds of a closer association between the Educational Systems of Sarawak and Brunei have already been sown. In due course they will produce a greater unity between our respective Education Departments.

In the fields of English and Chinese Education Brunei also maintains close contact with the other territories, especially so in connection with Chinese Education. A Chinese Inspector from Sarawak visits Brunei once a year and inspects all Chinese Schools. Up to date however, no attempt has been made to achieve uniformity in the Grant-in-Aid systems of the two States, but in the registration and training of teachers and the Controlling of the Schools, views have been exchanged by all three Departmental Heads. Certain general principles have been discussed but as the policy in respect of Chinese Schools is still in the process of being revised at Higher Levels, no definite and complete policy has yet emerged.

Community Development : Kampong Ayer. Many of these developments must await the availability of adequate staff, not only personnel for its rank and file, but also directing and subordinate officers. In respect of Kampong Ayer, a scheme is now in the process of being evolved under which a number of schools will be built there next year. It is felt that this is the best way to attack the backwardness of a section of the people who live there. It has been found that school children introduce into their homes the ideas they are taught in the schools. This method also ensures that a generation is growing up who will not in certain things at least, "Follow in their parents' footsteps".

Most of Miss Gwilliam's recommendations, which as I have said, were discussed when she was in Brunei have not yet been implemented because the conditions which hindered tackling them before, still obtain. The main hindrance is the lack of staff. This not only militates against starting and maintaining new projects of general and public utility; but also holds up such important and pressing matters as increasing the number of schools and improving the existing ones. This applies to all types of schools. The Malay Schools are very short of staff, and no relief can be expected until 1952. The Chinese schools are not only

experiencing shortages of staffs but also suffer from constant changes in their personnel. One English School, namely, the Catholic Mission School, Seria, started the year with an adequate staff; one or two members of which are fairly well qualified. The extra staff has been recruited from among the wives of the Oil Company's employees. In respect of the contemplated Government English School, all efforts so far have failed to obtain a properly qualified teacher. In relation to starting new projects, it can be said, that each individual at present in the field is not only performing the duties of his office but is also engaged in some type of useful public service which takes up most of his or her spare time. This applies specifically to school teachers who enter very fully into "extra mural" activities. For example, besides evening games' periods, all the Malay teachers in the Brunei Town School, which is typical, are active in both the Scout and the Red Cross Movements; and ninety-five percent of them attend Government evening classes two hours per night three times a week to learn English.

To further burden those who are bearing the heat and burden of the day would mean poor attainments, not only in the projects and enterprises they are now engaged in, but also in any new ones started up. The story is therefore, that most of the sound recommendations made by Miss Gwilliam, the necessity of implementing which is fully recognised here, must await the acquisition of new personnel. But the question is, from whence will this new personnel be forthcoming? We cannot look to any of our schools to turn out sufficient numbers to fill the lower ranks; much less the higher. English Schools have just reached 5th year Primary; Malay schools the same. It is true a few pupils from the English Schools have gone to Kuching to enter higher classes than those provided here; but a good many of these, owing to slow rehabilitation since the war finished, have a poor foundation upon which to build; due to their having been taught in their earlier standards by inexperienced and poorly qualified teachers. Some of these will no doubt return in due course.

It may be suggested that Brunei should look abroad for such personnel; but it is very difficult to entice suitably educated types from Sarawak or North Borneo. This is understandable, because people are disinclined to leave their own States without some financial inducement over and above that which they can earn at home. Again, I doubt if either Sarawak or North Borneo have any in this category to spare; there seems to be plenty of employment for such in those territories.

Thus many things we should like to start up must wait for "a more convenient season".

Jawi Script. It is intended to postpone the teaching of Jawi until Standard two, for the reason that if we accept pupils into the English Schools who have passed Standard three in a Malay School their knowledge of Rumi will have to equal that now obtaining in Standard four. As far as abolishing it is concerned, besides other sentimental reasons for retaining it, is the circumstance that in the Malay Paper in the Cambridge School Certificate;

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a candidate scores more marks if he writes his Composition in the Jawi Script. Jawi must therefore be retained because all Malays would naturally take their own language in that examination. Then again it would be necessary to those who remain on in Malay Schools, who presumably would find employment wherein a knowledge of both the Jawi and Rumi characters would be advantageous.

I will deal with the points not included in the above memorandum in my Annual Report.

(Sg) JAMES PEARCE  
State Education Officer  
Brunei.

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Annual Reports: Education 1950. 1951. MS Records of the British Colonial Office CO 943/2/11. The National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). State Papers Online Colonial, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/HBQGTE786630535/SPOC?u=omni&sid=bookmark-SPOC&pg=1](http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/HBQGTE786630535/SPOC?u=omni&sid=bookmark-SPOC&pg=1). Accessed 21 Dec. 2024.